

The Weekly Almanian

VOL. 1. NO. 16.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 1908.

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"MOHAMMED"

This Oration By C. L. Hull Took
First Place In Composition
In The Local Contest,

From that remote time to which Mythology points as the beginning, the mind of man has been groping upward after God. Ignorance and superstition have wrapped him about like a thick darkness. But in the midst of the impenetrable gloom the straining eye has caught a shadow flitting past which was thought to be that of the Infinite. Some have thought that by reaching far out they could feel the presence of the Deity. And amid the crash of thunder the rush of the whirlwind, or the silence of the desert, a few have thought that they heard His voice speaking to them. What they remembered they have delivered to the world as a sacred trust. Such an one was Mohammed, the founder of Islam.

In a barren, sandy valley of South-eastern Arabia, walled in on either side by frowning peaks, lies the little city of Mecca.

Here somewhat over thirteen centuries ago, Mohammed was ushered in upon the affairs of men.

Few events in the history of the world have been of greater consequence to humanity. There was nothing to mark him from the multitude of other children borne in that land before and since, who have all gone down to nameless dust. Yet no heavenly messengers proclaimed his birth. No wise men came from afar to worship him. But well might the sky have blazed forth its fiery language, and the earth have rocked upon her foundations. They have been moved by less. A gigantic power lay dormant within that weakly, weeping handful of human flesh. It was to become one of the most potent figures seen stalking across the horizon of the past.

It is difficult to measure human greatness. But this we know: It does not come to men as a legacy. Inherited titles, wealth, culture and education are no more a part of his intrinsic greatness than a gaudy garment draped about him. They give him no more right to the reputation of greatness than the grandeur of the firmament which gleams above him. Greatness exists within the man himself. It is as much a part of him as his hands or his feet. And it is demonstrated by achievement. But achievement is the overcoming of obstacles and obstacles determine the character of environment. Thus human greatness consists in the rise of a man above the environment into which he is cast. And we must measure him therefore not only by the eminence to which he has attained, but by the depths from which he has risen. Judged by this standard Mohammed is the peer of any man who has walked the earth. What

man has reached such heights? What man commenced so low? You philosophical historian forget your history for a moment and tell me by any rule of human probability the future of this orphaned, epileptic sor of the desert. What will be his influence upon the men of an age twelve centuries after his bones have crumbled in the dust? Consider that he was born beneath the dwarfing shadow of idolatry, in a land for ages the home of effeminacy and vice. Recollect that his cradle was rocked by the palsied hand of ignorance, and that the hateful form of polygamy crooned above it, breathing into his nostrils its tainted breath. And remember that he could not read or write a single word. For him the treasures of history, religion, philosophy and law may as well never have been. All the knowledge he possessed came to him from the lips of gossiping rumor, and from Nature with her deserts of shifting sands and verdant oases, her hurrying storm clouds and silent stars.

What man witnessing that beginning could have predicted the end? Mohammed lived to see a benighted people leaping into furious life through the power of his genius. At his command governments and idols were overturned with equal ease. And on every hand were peoples bowing low at the God of his dreams, ordering their lives to the laws of his meditations. But could he have looked thirteen centuries into the future? What a picture would have met his gaze! Dying he still lives, and in a power never yet compassed in flesh and blood. Tonight the eyes of an eighth part of the human race are turned in adoration toward the city of his birth. Five times this day 180,000,000 human beings have stood thus in supplication to his God. The evil in 180,000,000 human hearts has been curbed by his precepts, and the good has been advanced.

Would you compare him with the other giants of earth? Plato's abstruse theories are known to a few stoop-shouldered scholars; Mohammed's teachings are the conversation of the multitude. Napoleon's conquests were dissolved before he had them finished; Mohammed's continued four hundred years after his death. Shakespeare is known to the educated few of a single tongue; the Koran is a text-book for nations.

Or would you match him with a maker of religion? Saul of Tarsus and Jesus of Nazareth are wound into Christianity as light and heat in the same sunbeam. But take the Son of God out and what have you left? Who would have heard of Saul think you, had it not been for Jesus. He would have lived and died a quibbling Pharisee. Take him out of Christianity and you have Christianity still. Take Mohammed out of Islam and you have nothing.

To these dusky millions Mohammed unites the virtues of philosopher, warrior, poet, and seer. He is a Plato, a Paul, a Napoleon, and a Shakespeare all in one. Matched with his colossal proportions these others shrink and shrivel into insignificance. It is not that they are so small but that he is so great. He overlaps them at both

ends of the race. Handicapped beyond our conception at the beginning, who shall say how much he exceeds them at the end? That part of the tale may not be told until the universe shall coil and fold itself for eternity, for the lives of religions are measured in ages.

But we must remember that Mohammed was not a god. With all his greatness he was yet a man; and in that lies all his glory, in that all his shame. Being a man he was heir to the frailties of men. And it seems the lot of all great men that their faults shall be great in proportion to their genius. Indeed it would be strange if ratio of fault and virtue in them should differ from that of other men. And in a man of such colossal proportions we should not be surprised at finding a corresponding fault.

But Mohammed's enemies never tire of magnifying his crime. They never weary of recounting its details—how with his army of swift footed Arabs he descended upon cities and tribes, how he gave them the choice between Islam and death, and how a trail of blood marked his pathway. But they forget a part of the story. They forget that for twelve long, weary years he patiently preached his gospel to his neighbors and friends. They forget that the idolaters first plotted to murder him, and that fleeing his native city for his life, he at last took up arms in self defense.

Yet this does not explain his conduct. The cause lies deeper. But his error was of the head, not of the heart.

His love for mankind was distorted until it looked like hate, turned backward in its course as it were, by the most appalling contrast ever conceived in the human soul. You must read the Koran if you would have the man's secret. There you may see the very pulse of his fierce heart. Read his description of that Paradise which he saw with its crystal rivers and splashing fountains, its spreading palm-trees, its low-hanging fruits. A multitude of happy birds in the trees are singing love songs to their mates. Gorgeous flowers blush and bloom and beautiful music floats on the perfumed air. In this tranquil garden of ease the blest, clad in silken garments, recline with their heavenly brides in contentment and love, feasting and drinking forever.

Then read his description of that horrible hell with its tortured victims rolling in lakes of seething fire. He exhausts the power of language in describing the agony of that place. He tells of the groans and wailing cries, of the suffocating fumes and crazing thirst. When the victims beg for water molten brass is poured down their throats, and when the skin is burned until it loses sense, another is given to help on the fiendish torment.

Mohammed's act was the only logical result of his faith. We believe that an act is evil inasmuch as it causes a preponderance of pain and sorrow; and that it is good only inasmuch as it prevents pain and makes for happiness. Such a distorted vision of the future coupled with such reasoning has been the mother of every

(Continued on page four)

Y. W. C. A. CONVENTION

A Report of The 22d Annual
State Convention Held At
Bay City, Jan. 16-19.

The Twenty-second Annual convention of the Michigan Young Women's Christian Association was held at Bay City January 16 to 19. The convention opened Thursday evening with greeting from Bay City speakers and the convention sermon "Specialist in Religion" by Rev. H. L. Crain of Detroit. Friday morning was given over to the reports and roll call of both the city and student associations and a Bible lesson on the "Message of the Book of Acts" by Dr. Warren P. Behan the Bible teacher of the Y. W. C. A. Secretaries' Training School Chicago.

Friday afternoon was spent in group conferences both city and student where the practical work of different committees was discussed and compared. One of the most enjoyable social affairs of the convention was the banquet held at the Congregational Church Friday evening. Miss Helen Keet of Detroit was toast mistress and many toasts were responded to by leaders in the Association work. The hall responded with college songs and yells whenever a pause allowed and Alma with the largest college delegation made herself heard above all others.

The Saturday session of the convention opened with the "Morning Prayer" led by Miss Vera Reynolds of Saginaw. The time from 9:15 to 11:30 was given over entirely to the business of the Association. The proposed recommendations for the 22nd annual convention by the state committee was adopted. The first among these recommendations was that the state associations assume the salary of Miss Ethel Dobbins of Foochow, China. The amount to cover this salary was raised during the morning. A share, also of the amount desired to carry on the state committee work was raised by Association and individual pledges.

Dr. Behan again presided at the Bible lesson hour. His subject was "The Message of the Book of James." He gave as the thought for the entire book, "Love Your Religion."

This talk was very practical and created on the part of every listener a desire to become better acquainted with the book of James.

Lunch was served to all delegates Saturday at the First Baptist Church.

In the afternoon many short talks were given. Miss Maxcey, Detroit; Miss Alexander, Detroit; Miss Glenn, Olivet College and Miss Joy Leitch of Hillsdale discussed our work in China.

Miss Gertrude Smith, Student Secretary at the U. of M. presented the industrial work of a college association and Miss Hyndman the city work.

After several years work in the

(Continued on page two.)

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We take a great deal of pleasure in publishing in this issue the oration which won first place in composition in the local contest. Mr. Hull's markings on style were quite remarkable as he received two first ranks and one second from the three judges. Had his delivery been better, he would undoubtedly have taken a much higher place than he did in the final ranking. The quality of this production gives rise to certain general reflections upon oratory in Alma. Why is interest in oratory declining here, when it should be on the increase? Why do the students fail to support such contests? Why do the people of the city stay away from them? Well, the cold, brutal truth is that our contests lack "class." With the exception of the oration mentioned above, those given in the contest were hurriedly written abortive compositions imperfectly conceived and crudely executed. A high grade composition is more apt to receive high grade delivery than a low grade composition; and such a production must be written slowly. A year is not too much time to devote to a contest oration. And is there anyone here at work on an oration for next year? Well not exactly. Isn't it high time for someone to begin "doing things?"

OPEN HOUSE COMING.

An enthusiastic meeting of the men in Pioneer Hall was held last Wednesday to consider the "open house" question. After a long and thoughtful debate it was voted to appoint a committee to decide when an "open house" should be given, and what manner of entertainment should be provided. To the great regret of many of the men it was thought that Pioneer is too small to admit of entertaining all of the college students. Therefore an invitation will be extended only to the women of the college and to the members of the faculty. In all probability the function will occur sometime in the latter part of February.

Y. W. C. A. CONVENTION

(Continued from page one.)

factories and shops of Jackson. Miss Hyndman's words came from one who knows by actual experience what the lives of working girls are. All the delegates were glad to have the privilege of hearing Dr. Behan give a talk on the "Methods of Bible Study."

The pleasant social side of the association was again shown Saturday afternoon when Mrs. Allan McEwan threw open her beautiful home for a reception to all the delegates and their hostesses. Everyone enjoyed shaking hands with the leaders of the conference and with many of the most prominent women of the Bay Cities.

Throughout the entire convention there was a great interest shown in missions. This culminated in the Saturday evening meeting. Interest seemed to center in the work in China. Miss Josephine Fearon of the U. of M. was present last year at the International Student Convention held at Tokio, Japan. Her report of this convention gave many interesting facts concerning our eastern fellow students and also a greater breadth to our conception of the Y. M. and Y. W. C. A. movement among students.

Miss Dobbins who began her journey to Foochow, China, the very next evening showed us how clearly she understood the field of her work and how glad she was to represent the Michigan girls. The message of one who has been on the firing line is always welcome and so that great church full of people listened to Miss Helen Elgie who for six years has taught in a girls' school at Ningpo, China, returning to America on her furlough last May. Miss Elgie roomed in the same tent with the Alma delegates to Lake Geneva last summer so the Alma girls felt that they knew her. In her low, quiet and yet powerful way Miss Elgie made every one feel responsibility in the foreign field. As she described the crying needs of that country which has grown so dear to her heart, we were happy that while we could do no more just now than send Miss Dobbins with our prayers, we could be preparing for a greater work.

The different leaders of the convention held service in the various churches throughout the city on Sunday morning. I had the privilege of hearing Miss Theresa Wilbur, a National Student Secretary present the association work in the First Baptist Church. The force and appeal of her talk might be shown by a girl a student of the U. of M. who came up to me after the service and said, "Oh, don't you wish you were through school and ready to begin?"

The climax of the convention was the meeting held by Mrs. Grace Whitney Hoff, of Paris, France, Sunday afternoon and evening. Sixteen years ago Mrs. Hoff decided to give her time, influence money and her own self toward the work of helping young women. Her name stands for much to all Michigan girls. Grace Cottage a summer home was a gift from her to the associations of Michigan. The convention was held at this time in January rather than as



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usual in November just so that Mrs. Hoff might be present during her visit to America. Her talks were most helpful: she herself being the embodiment of a consecrated life. The afternoon vesper service was turned into a consecration meeting. Many pledged their lives to higher and better purposes, to ones of service.

The farewell service followed Mrs. Hoff's talk in the evening. The time to say good bye had come. All the leaders left some parting thought on what the convention had meant. The Alma delegation felt like reiterating Miss Elgie when she said it had been a feast to a starving person. Mrs. Scripps pronounced the 22nd convention adjourned after all had joined hands in a circle about the church and sung, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds." Much was given and put into the life of every girl who had the opportunity of being at this convention. It has all been said, we have heard and it now remains for us to DO.

A DREAM.

Last night I dreamed a grand sweet dream
I builded my soul a mansion of love—
I made my soul a house of love.
There were birds and bees
And fountains and trees,
For a roof the blue of the sky above;
And the sun looked down with a glad,
fond gleam
Each dewdrop burned like a tear of
love
As I strolled with my soul by a wood-
land stream
Whose ripples were thoughts of love:
And I sang by that stream
In the light of my dream
The songs of a sacred love.
Then the light of my dream began to
fade
(For dreams are strangely, wondrously
made)
The birds and bees

And brooks and trees
Were hushed in the trance of a mystic
shade
And I roamed with my soul in the
magic spell
Under the stars we loved so well,
Drunk with thoughts whereby gods
are swayed—
Too vast for words to tell
And this I have seen in my beautiful
dream
In my palace of thought and love.

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CLASS AND SOCIETY

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Y. W. C. A.

The Y. W. C. A. will meet Sunday February 2, at the usual hour, 4:30 o'clock. The subject is "The Tongue Governed." James 3: 1-18.

JUNIOR.

A. R. Moon, who has been with the Junior class until this year, was in Alma over Sunday to act as toastmaster at the Y. M. C. A. banquet.

Monday evening the class held a spread in Moon's honor at Wright Hall. As the fudge didn't cool in time before the oratorical contest we adjourned until after the contest. Upon our return we remained long enough to take care of "Polly's Production" and wake up the neighborhood with the '09 yell and with Chappel's singing.

The great event of the year will take place Friday night when the Junior exhibition will be held.

Remember the date. Get your girls for it. We are sorry that neither the Hon. Royal Campbell our famous orator, who addressed you last year on "Eloquence Among the Indians," is on the program, nor Mr. Moon, that brilliant planet who spoke on the "Effect of Greece on the People." But we have other orators of equal repute, so come and have a good time at our expense.

Mt. PLEASANT -- ALMA.

The fast basketball five from Mt. Pleasant Normal defeated the Almatarians Saturday evening, 25-12. The Alma five were playing their first game against an experienced team and their showing was very good in view of the fact. During the first half the Normals made 20 points to Alma's 8, but in the second it was a 4 to 5 game. The failure of the Almatarians to guard and throw baskets accounts for their inability to win. The next game with the Normals here will very likely result in an Alma victory. The contest was clean throughout, very little wrangling or roughness occurring. Prof. Tambling of Mt. Pleasant refereed.

SOPHOMORE DEBATE.

The Sophomore debate last Friday night on the question resolved "That immigration should be further restricted" resulted in a decision of two to one in favor of the affirmative. The judges were President Bruske, Professor M. E. Houghawout and Secretary A. B. Cook. Professor J T Ewing presided and Professor J Q Adams was time-keeper. As predicted by last week's Almanian there was a large audience which enjoyed immensely the splendid arguments and the earnest manner of the debaters. The affirmative was upheld by Alex Duncanson, Miss Mrytie Creaser and Dan Duncanson. The Negative were Miss Florence Bateson, Irwin Bradfield, Bryon Chapel and Miss Elsie Bond. The speeches were all excellent and were a most thorough proof of the general ability of Alma students in that direction.

Pay your subscriptions!

Y. M. C. A. BANQUET.

The second annual banquet of the College Y M C A was held in the parlors of the Presbyterian Church Saturday evening, January 18. The room was tastefully decorated with banners and bunting. The menu furnished by the ladies of the church was thoroughly enjoyed. "Five seconds between Marshall and Helmer" according to Warren L. Rogers, who filled the space. There was a warmth of feeling and friendliness that expressed itself in roasts and jest. Disappointment was felt at the absence of Dr Studer. Illness prevented him and many regrets were voiced by those who had heard him last year. A. R. Moon, Secretary of the Association at M A. C. was toastmaster. Those of the men who know Moon can calculate what he would do when he had planned on a thing. His remarks and jokes were well suited to the occasion. Especially when he introduced Warren L. Rogers, State Student Secretary. After turning the tables on Moon, Mr. Rogers delivered one of his characteristic talks. He chose as a subject "Men of Many Inches." When a boy his ideal of a big man was one, who was tall and well built. He

thought he had to be this in order to be an Abraham Lincoln. The true measurement of a man being his character, he showed how a man may best grow to a character of many inches. This address was eagerly received. Mr L. E. Buell, whom we were fortunate in securing at the eleventh hour, spoke on higher purposes. He cited four men of purpose whom he had met in the previous forty-eight hours and who were filling lives of usefulness. He very fittingly referred to the short though purposeful life of Robert McKee. He closed with an expressed desire that every one should have the highest possible purpose in their lives. Mr. Buell in his associations with all classes of men in our state has proven himself the type of a man that he wished others to be.

Messrs. Lucius Bagley and George D. Sutton sang solos and added much to the program

A LEAP YEAR GIRL.

There's things around the campus
'At's worsen 'an any goat.
'At gets on careless men and boys
An' grabs 'em by the throat.
There's things around the campus
'At's worsen'n any dean,
'N some is very short 'an fat,
An' some is long an' lean
There's things around the campus, mind
An' if you dont' take care
A leap year girl — a leap year girl—
Will grab you by the hair.
There's things around the campus
'At's worsen'an Wright Hall hash
They're actin' like an old wet hen
An' a thousand times as brash.
There's things around the campus
Worse'n Profs an' tough old beef,
An' they shriek an' laugh an' giggle
Till you wish that you were deaf.
There's things around the campus, mind
An' if you don't take care,
A leap year girl — a leap year girl —
Will snatch you by the hair
There's devils' darnin' needles may
Come round and sew your ear,
An' angle worms may crawl inside
An' then you'll never hear
An' jigger bugs get on you,
An' a thousand legged worms
May make you writhe an' twist an'
groan
An' cry an' yell an' squirm,
But the worst thing 'at'll git you
If you don't take care
Is a leap year girl—a leap year girl—
A-clawin' at your hair

MOHAMMED

(Continued from page one.)

Bloody Mary: it has perched on every St. Bartholomew's day. It has perched on every Salem witch trial. It has perched on every man who would kneel with him in the gloom of that cavern on Mt. Heron. And looking, now upon the felony of that Heaven, now upon the agony of that Hell, let him say if Mohammed had evil in his heart when he sought to save the millions to come from such a fate, by hastening to a few what must come to all.

But his enemies have not been content with calling him murderer. With fanatical zeal they have heaped the title of fraud upon his defenseless dust. But I declare to you tonight that though they call his theology a "blunder, they cannot call the

gigantic... those solemn dishonest pilgrimages year after year to that lonely cave on Mt. Heron. Consider those days of silent fast and those nights of agonized prayer, spent alone among those frowning mountains, with that reverent remembrance that he had passed the fortieth milestone where the school of youth no longer leaps at the thought of fame, before he proclaimed a word of his gospel. And he was fifty-two when he entered upon his career of blood. He was an old man, struggling far down life's road where malice noonday almost touches night, and this world has little more to give him peace.

But the infallible proof of Mohammed's honesty lies in his attitude toward miracles. Scoffers would taunt him in the street crying, "The Koran is a confused heap of dreams. Let him come unto us therefore with miracles, in like manner as the former prophets were sent." What kind of deception could he not have practiced in that ignorant, superstitious, wonder-loving age? What miraculous story would they not have believed when they were demanding such a story? And what imposter would have hesitated an instant to tell one more lie to secure belief in the rest? No heathen religion has been so poor, so weak, so false, that it could not afford its miracles. But Mohammed scorned the tricks with which false prophets have imposed upon credulity of humanity in so many lands and ages. He declared with indignation that the falling of the rain and the growing of the corn shall be signs unto them that shall believe.

That Mohammed thought he was God's apostle we know. Whether he was or not we cannot say. But it is hard to believe that such a mighty movement is an accident. We like to think that there is a loving Father somewhere up in the blue who guides the affairs of men. And we believe that in His kindness He has ordained a law whereby evil is destroyed and only the fit survive.

Mohammed gave to humanity all that a man can give, a long laborious life. At the age of sixty-three Allah called him and he went to solve the great mystery with a prayer upon his lips. He leaped out into the great unknown without a fear.

If to spurn the temptation to deceive your fellow-men is goodness, Mohammed was good.

If to receive the homage of an eight part of the human race is greatness, Mohammed was great.

If to declare your principles and enact your ideals in the face of death is heroic, Mohammed was a hero.

AUSTEN K. DE BLOIS

One of the Best Liked Lectures Ever Delivered Before An Alma Audience.

The lecture given by Dr. Austen K de Blois last week, Tuesday in the Opera House, was the third number on the Leyeum course. It was considered by many good critics as one of the very best addresses ever given from that platform, being unique in delivery and uplifting in its thought. Dr. de Blois is a very large man who says beautiful things in a quiet, yet charming manner. His manner of speaking is the conversational informed with radiant ideas. He is pastor of the first Baptist church of Chicago, has traveled, and is an orator of national reputation.

His subject was the "Man of Leisure." His idea was that the secret of living is to make time's work so that he shall have time left for pleasure. It is by improving our leisure, also that we create more leisure. "It is in life's pauses that we learn to live."

The tramp is not the man of leisure for he is too lazy to get the good that leisure time affords, nor is the millionaire a man of leisure for he is too busy to take time to live the noble life. One should not live in a hurry, but should do things by schedule, get them done with expedition, and devote the remainder of the time toward developing character.

The man of leisure is the one who has time to greet a friend, and to read

and learn something outside his own work. He knows something of a music, and travelling. He is not driven by work but drives it. He is not crushed by work but surmounts it. Concentration and systematic effort afford leisure. Concentration is secured by earnestness, and earnestness is only another way of saying will power. We need to say, "I will," and then do it. Then we will get along without worry, and without hurry, then we will be able to live upright and beautiful lives

CAMPUS GOSSIP.

The Olivet Echo for January 15 has an unusually strong article on the purpose of college athletics written by Coach Kennedy of Olivet. The title is "We Come to College for Our Health." Read it.

The Phi Phi Alpha programs for the second semester are out in the customary neat booklet form bound in dark grey and gold. A unique theme arrangement is one pleasing feature of the outlines.

Jokers tied the chair legs in Wright Hall dining room together Thursday morning. A merry scramble ensued when the boarders endeavored to take their seats at breakfast. The alarm clock stunt must be nearly due now.

Bob Fredericks says he found out why the meals at the Hall are so slim. When he was passing the postoffice on his way home after the oratorical contest a huge rat followed by two others dropped from the building and struck him on the head. At first Bob thought he was being held up but the agitated demeanor of the rodents soon convinced him that they were merely flying eastward to escape death in an Irish stew.

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